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ABSTRACT

The study group of five teachers who examined aspects of the Kentucky Beginning Teacher Internship program developed this guide for beginning teachers. Members of the group (3 resource teachers and 2 first-year teachers) surveyed a random sample of 234 interns to assess their opinions about the internship program and to aggregate advice they would give future interns. This guide, based on 125 responses, offers advice in 4 major categories that emerged from survey responses: (1) people involved in the program (intern, resource teacher, principal, teacher educator); (2) activities (orientation meeting, conferencing with the resource teacher, observations, committee meetings); (3) resources (the resource teacher, the program handbook, libraries, professional groups, departments of education, college/university personnel, other teachers); and (4) general tips, most of which have to do with maintaining a positive attitude and a confident and open frame of mind. The internship survey form is appended. (JD)

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KEA-AEL

Keys to an Effective Internship: A Guide for Kentucky Beginning Teachers

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- the improvement of professional quality,
- the improvement of curriculum and instruction,
- the improvement of community support, and
- the improvement of opportunity for access to quality education by all children.

Information about AEL projects, programs, and services is available by contacting the Appalachia Educational Laboratory, Post Office Box 1348, Charleston, West Virginia 25325.

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ABSTRACT

The Appalachia Educational Laboratory and Kentucky Education Association jointly sponsored during 1986 a study group of five teachers who examined aspects of the Kentucky Beginning Teacher Internship and responded with a product useful to teachers. Members of the group, three 1985-86 resource teachers and two 1985-86 interns (first-year teachers), developed a survey to assess intern opinions about the Internship Program and aggregate advice they would give future interns. Responses of 125 interns from a random sample of 234 interns (N=800) were analyzed and used by study group members to develop "Keys to an Effective Internship: A Guide for Kentucky Beginning Teachers."

The guide offers advice to new teachers in the Kentucky Beginning Teacher Internship Program from past interns and resource teachers, discussed in four major categories that emerged from survey responses--People, Activities, Resources, and General Tips. Intern readers of the guide, distributed in Kentucky by KEA and throughout Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia by AEL, are asked to complete an Evaluation/Additions form to improve any future editions of "Keys to an Effective Internship."

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

KEA and AEL gratefully acknowledge the development assistance provided by the following KEA members on "Keys to an Effective Internship":

D. Jane Charmoli, Jefferson County Schools
John DiGiamberardino, Harrodsburg Independent Schools
Marnel Moorman, Shelby County Schools
Michael Stanley, Ashland City Schools
Frank Wells, Johnson County Schools

Providing survey and guide editing, formatting, printing, and distribution assistance important to putting the guide in your hands were:

Floye Perkins
Garnet Williamson
Kentucky Education Association

Pat Cahape
Jane Hange
Shirley Keene
Barbara Merrill
Appalachia Educational Laboratory

Finally, and most importantly, KEA, AEL, and study group members appreciate the contributions of the 125 Kentucky interns of 1985-86 who generously shared their experiences and advice in the Kentucky Internship Survey. Their responses both emphasized the need for "Keys to an Effective Internship" and should serve as those keys for future beginning teachers in Kentucky and throughout AEL's Region.

INTRODUCTION

Background

Beginning teachers have survival concerns, according to the literature and the recollections of most educators who have gone on to become "veteran teachers." Some of those concerns in Kentucky are shared by participants in the Kentucky Beginning Teacher Internship, a program of assessment and assistance for first-year teachers and teachers new to Kentucky. The components of the internship program are discussed thoroughly in documents such as your "Kentucky Beginning Teacher Internship Program Handbook," available from the Kentucky Department of Education.

While the Handbook provided to you and all interns is the first and most definitive source of information on the purposes and components of the program, many interns have discovered they need advice on a more personal basis, not provided in the Handbook. The Kentucky Education Association (KEA) recognized this during 1985-86, the first year of the internship's implementation. When approached by the Appalachia Educational Laboratory to consider formation of a collaborative study group, KEA identified interns as desirable beneficiaries of a study group's research and product.

KEA nominated five teachers, interns and resource teachers, to the KEA-AEL study group and hosted their initial meeting in Frankfort. The group determined that while further training and an assistance guide were being developed for resource teachers charged with aiding beginning teachers, more written assistance was needed by interns. A survey of interns, developed by a study group member, was edited and printed with AEL and KEA assistance. KEA obtained names and addresses of a random sample of 1985-86 interns and mailed the survey to these 234 teachers during August 1986. The survey (included as Appendix A) was designed to elicit advice from interns for future beginning teachers regarding main program components. Over 125 surveys were returned, a response rate of 53%, after two followup contacts by KEA staff.

The study group analyzed responses and developed categories emerging from the data. These categories--People, Activities, Resources, and General Tips--form the sections of this guide. Study group members developed the advice contained in the first three sections using the interns' responses. The experiences of study group members as 1985-86 interns or resource teachers are reflected in the General Tips section.

Purpose

"Keys to an Effective Internship" should help you, the intern, to anticipate some crucial moments, to discover resources available to assist you this year and every year of your career, to take full benefit of assistance offered by your resource teacher and others, and to relax and realize you're not in the process alone. Study group members, KEA, and AEL hope you'll read the guide, refer to it often for specific resources, and let other interns know of the guide and assistance available from KEA and AEL. Your advice to interns can be included in future editions of "Keys to an Effective Internship" if you will complete the Evaluation/Additions form included as Appendix B and return it to AEL. Thank you.

PEOPLE

Beginning Teacher Committee

The beginning teacher committee consists of four people who are most involved with the internship program. A three-person committee is assigned to work with the intern. The three are: the principal of the school where the intern is teaching, a resource teacher serving in the same school or district, and a teacher educator. The roles and responsibilities of each are discussed below.

Intern

One of your major responsibilities as an intern is to know the contents of the "Kentucky Beginning Teacher Internship Program Handbook," including the Florida Performance Measurement System (FPMS) and the manner in which you are to be evaluated. An essential part of the intern year is the orientation meeting, ideally held prior to the start of school. During this meeting, you should discover the expectations of the committee and the requirements of the school system. This includes observation times, lesson plans, contents of the portfolio, school board policies, and participation in extracurricular activities.

Each committee member observes the intern's class at least three times during the internship year. You should prepare for the observations and should have lesson plans available for review. Many of the surveyed interns mentioned that there was no need to worry about the observations, but to remember the purpose of the intern year and the program itself: "...to provide a comprehensive set of supervised support services for first year Kentucky teachers..." (Handbook). The committee is there to help.

Finally, those surveyed suggested that the intern should be assertive and confident. The Handbook states that, as an intern, you are to "function as an active member of your beginning teacher committee by taking part in discussions, seeking clarification when you do not understand expectations or remarks, working with the resource teacher to improve your instructional skills, reporting back to the committee on your perceived progress, and in other ways showing your professional attitude toward the internship year."

Resource Teacher

The resource teacher is appointed by the Department of Education from a pool of teachers trained for the position. Responsibilities of the resource teacher include:

- Spends a minimum of 70 hours working with the intern, 20 of these in observing the intern's teaching and 50 outside class time;
- Serves as the major provider of assistance to the intern;
- Observes the intern a minimum of three times to complete the FPMS evaluation tool;
- Meets with the committee and intern at least three times; and
- Meets with the committee a fourth time to arrive at the final professional judgement on continuation of certification for the intern.

The major responsibility of the resource teacher is "to serve as a model and mentor to the intern" (Handbook). Many of those surveyed felt that the resource teacher was the most useful and helpful person on the committee. The resource teacher is

there to help the you by discussing such subjects as discipline, parent conferences, planning, scheduling, testing, and paperwork. Since resource teachers spend more time with interns than the others on the committee, their reports of observed progress and/or problems are essential. It is the resource teacher's responsibility to keep track of the hours spent with the intern and report these to the principal.

Many interns emphasized the importance of establishing early good communications with your resource teacher. Generally this person has been selected for personal training in this role, familiarity with your teaching assignment, and proximity to your school. Your successful internship is an important goal for the resource teacher. This individual is rewarded both monetarily and intrinsically through your development as a professional.

The interns surveyed made numerous recommendations for ensuring the resource teacher's effectiveness, stating that the resource teacher should: (1) teach in the same building as the intern, (2) teach the same subject/grade as the intern, (3) be assigned prior to the first day of school for important intern orientation, and (4) be provided with guidelines for the 50 hours of out-of-class assistance. Beginning with the 1986-87 school year, resource teachers have additional information in the form of "Assisting Beginning Teachers: A Guide for Resource Teachers" and "Guide for Interpreting the FPMS Summative Instrument," both from the Kentucky Department of Education.

Principal

The role of the school principal is to:

- Chair the committee;
- Coordinate the committee's schedules;
- Observe the intern a minimum of three times;
- Meet with the intern and other committee members a minimum of three times; and
- Meet with the committee a fourth time to arrive at the final professional judgement on continuation of certification for the intern.

Also, periodically the principal is to "reinforce committee members' awareness of the confidentiality of the internship observations and committee meetings and of all documents completed by committee members that relate to the progress of the intern" (Handbook).

The interns surveyed described a variety of experiences with the principal, from "had 110% support from my principal" to "felt I had to teach the way she did."

As an intern, you should utilize the principal for help with problems, particularly if they relate to scheduling of internship activities or compatibility with other committee members. If observations and committee meetings are not scheduled in a timely fashion, interns should take the initiative in discussing this with the principal.

Teacher Educator

The teacher educator serves through the cooperation of teacher training institutions in each region of Kentucky. If a teacher educator is unavailable, the local district superintendent appoints an instructional supervisor from the school district. This committee member's responsibilities include:

- Observing the intern at least three times;
- Meeting with the intern and other committee members a minimum of three times; and
- Meeting a fourth time with the

committee to arrive at the final professional judgement on continuation of certification for the intern.

The major responsibility of the teacher educator is "to function as a resource person for the intern and other members of the committee..." (Handbook). Also, the teacher educator is to help connect the performance of the intern in the classroom with the content of teacher preparation programs. Those surveyed also conveyed different experiences with the teacher educator. Some felt the teacher educator was "very helpful" and "supportive and understanding"; others commented that the person was "too critical," "unfamiliar with the subject area/grade level," or "had the personality (and handshake) of a fish."

Teacher educators are usually the most remote members of committees since they primarily converse with and observe interns only during scheduled observations and committee meetings. They are trained in all aspects of the FPMS and can be a source of information during these visits if you take the initiative in asking questions or voicing concerns. However, rarely will teacher educators be available to provide assistance nor is it their responsibility to do so.

ACTIVITIES

The most obvious and important activity of the intern is to learn to be an effective classroom teacher through the mentorship of a skilled, experienced resource teacher. The "Kentucky Beginning Teacher Internship Program Handbook" states:

> The main goal of the program is to increase the likelihood that new teachers will experience success during their first year in the classroom. The focus of this program is on the improvement of classroom performance through the strengthening of productive teaching behaviors and the elimination of counterproductive behaviors.

To achieve this goal, the program requires an orientation meeting for interns, 50 hours of conferencing between the intern and the resource teacher, classroom observations of the intern by all members of the committee, and four meetings of the intern's committee. The fourth and final meeting is held "without the intern present...to render a professional judgement regarding the beginning teacher's certification status" (Handbook).

The Orientation Meeting

While no question on the survey directly addressed the required orientation meeting, over 78% of the respondents indicated they were familiar with the components of the internship program prior to their first observation. Only 10% of the respondents indicated they were unfamiliar with the program material

prior to their first observation or indicated they had not utilized the material supplied. It is strongly suggested that you attend the orientation meeting and take advantage of available written materials to learn more about the internship program.

Conferencing with the Resource Teacher

The program requires that a minimum of 50 hours, outside of class time, be spent with the intern and resource teacher working together. All time spent discussing job-related matters can be counted, regardless of the time of day or place. Many of the survey respondents indicated that the assistance given by the resource teacher was valuable. Suggestions were made that, in some instances, the 50 hours was too much time. Others called for more structure and planning of the time. Much concern was also expressed that the assigned resource teacher be in the same school and field of study as the intern if at all possible. During your internship, you should take full advantage of the resource teacher's assistance by bringing up topics for discussion and problem-solving (e.g., dealing with parents who don't seem interested, adapting materials for mainstreamed students, etc.)

Observations

The internship program requires that the resource teacher spend 20 hours in the intern's classroom. In addition, each member of the intern's committee must spend one hour observing and coding the behavior of the intern on the FPMS summative instrument before each of the first three committee meetings. The role taken by the observer may vary. Some will participate in the lesson, while others will observe and discuss the lesson after class.

In response to the survey, former interns offered many comments and concerns involving observations with the summative instrument. Some of the more frequent comments advised that the intern should try to be at ease, relaxed and confident. Others suggested that the intern should be contacted prior to observations concerning the scheduling of the observation visits. Work with your committee members to see that observations are properly scheduled. Comments were also expressed which advised that lessons always be well planned, that the intern be familiar with the behaviors coded on the summative instrument, and that criticisms be taken positively.

In preparing for observations, consider the kind of lesson (student-directed or teacher-directed) you will present. Consider using a lesson similar to one you have done before that was successful. Be sure to include activities for all levels of students in your class. Remember that the observer is observing you, not the students. Your reaction to the students is more important than the students' behavior.

Committee Meetings

The internship year includes four committee meetings. The intern meets with the committee for a portion of the first three meetings. At the fourth, a decision is made concerning the certification of the intern. Many of the interns responding to the survey expressed feelings of nervousness and anxiety over the meetings. However, nearly 70% said the meetings met their expectations. Meeting with each of the committee members individually, prior to the first group meeting, should give you some realistic expectations. Encourage your committee members to schedule meetings during times when participants are not rushed. Several

interns commented that the committee meetings should be taken as constructive criticism with the interns expressing their concerns to the committee members. Be open to suggestions for improvement.

During the first committee meeting, you should discuss the contents and use of the portfolio. Materials in the portfolio could include lesson plans, parent conference notes, school activities in which you have participated, and any other evidence of your teaching ability. Work with your committee members regarding the format for lesson plans. Assemble the portfolio according to your committee's instructions, and take it to each committee meeting.

RESOURCES

The internship program defines necessary components that will facilitate your experience as a beginning teacher. It is important to understand the roles of all participants and how to organize your in-class and out-of-class time to maximize the use of each. But there are other resources available to you that can be invaluable as you develop professionally throughout the year.

It is important to remember that the internship process is designed to help you become an informed, confident, competent teacher. Utilize as many resources as you can to attain that goal.

Resource Teacher

A review of the intern survey responses indicated that the resource cited as most valuable was not a material but a human resource--the resource teacher. Comments about this important committee member were predominantly positive, ranging from "mine was fantastic" to "most important and only effective part of the program." You will find suggestions on how to benefit most from resource teacher assistance in the People section of this guide.

Handbook

One resource that is literally at your fingertips is the "Kentucky Beginning Teacher Internship Program Handbook." The majority of surveyed interns regarded the Handbook as useful with comments including "helpful," "a good

orientation," and "very informative," along with several suggestions for its improvement. The Handbook provides a wealth of information about the internship process. Reading this early will clarify the procedure, put the components in perspective, and perhaps help to relieve any anxiety you may be feeling.

From their experiences with this resource, 1985-86 interns advise that you "read the Handbook and know expectations," "find the sections that pertain to you and read them carefully," "don't become overwhelmed by the whole Handbook," "become very familiar with the contents," and "discuss it with your committee members."

The authors of "Keys to an Effective Internship" suggest that you turn to your Handbook frequently in your first year of experience. Not only does the Handbook provide definitions of program components and specify responsibilities, it also aids organization by providing a check sheet to note committee members' names and contact information and the schedule for your observations and committee meetings.

The Handbook also provides your copy of the Summative Observation Instrument of the FPMS. Through study of the indicators of this instrument, you can understand the practices committee members are noting during your observations and begin to include effective indicators in your teaching. Some interns stated they had not read their Handbook. With all the new responsibilities of teaching, this is easy to understand. However, the Handbook can answer a number of questions that may arise from the internship process and reduce unnecessary contacts with your resource teacher or principal.

Libraries

Check with your school's librarian to identify books and materials from the school's professional library section that may be of assistance with a number of program components. Lesson planning, for example, is required during your internship and will occupy many hours of your teaching career. Yet many interns expressed the need for more guidelines on lesson plans. References in your school, college, or community library can help you write objectives, include all important components of a unit or lesson plan, develop a repertoire of many teaching strategies and activities, select activities appropriate to the content and student abilities, and set realistic time requirements for activities, assignments, and student learning.

The wealth of instructional materials available in your school library and frequently in your community library is a second important reason for becoming familiar with library resources. Too often even experienced teachers are unaware of picture files; newspaper resources; filmstrips, movies, single concept film loops, or videocassettes; maps, models, or self-instructional materials that may be housed in their own libraries.

Your school, community, or college library may contain books and journals to help you deal with student conditions such as the mainstreamed student, hyperactivity, behavior disorders, giftedness, or the loss of a parent. College and sometimes school libraries subscribe to several professional education journals, which you might review without charge prior to subscribing, or from which you may copy articles and activities. Journals and texts can also provide you with further background on the FPMS and specific practices such as teaching concepts, rewards and reinforcements, classroom management, and verbal and nonverbal communications.

Professional Associations/Organizations

Answers to your teaching questions, free or low-cost resources, and the camaraderie of working with other professionals can be yours through involvement in professional educator associations. The Kentucky Education Association has been involved from the inception of the Beginning Teacher Internship Program and continues to work toward its improvement. KEA has information on your rights and responsibilities during the internship, and can provide you with background reading on many of the FPMS indicators. KEA can also help you network with other interns in your region or teaching assignment.

In Kentucky, as well as nationally, teachers of all grades and subjects are served by professional associations such as the International Reading Association, the National Science Teachers Association, the National Councils of Teachers of Mathematics and of English, the National Association for Education of Young Children, the Association for Childhood Education International, and the National Middle School Association. Further information on available resources and contact persons can be obtained from appropriate divisions of the Kentucky Department of Education.

The Appalachia Educational Laboratory, copublisher of this document, serves teachers of all grades and subjects in its Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia service region. Information searches, a quarterly newsletter linking research and practice, brochures and books on general teaching concerns and specified subjects/topics, a toll-free Techline for computer advice, and technical assistance through associations and districts are available free of charge. Addresses and phone numbers for KEA and AEL are included on the cover page of this guide.

State and District Departments of Education

The Division of Teacher Education and Certification of the Office of Instruction in the KDE continues to monitor, evaluate, and revise the internship program. If a problem or concern develops during your internship, the most effective way to address the situation is to discuss it with the members of your beginning teacher committee. However, should you have a complaint relative to the failure of the committee to comply with internship regulations for assisting and assessing you, you have the right and responsibility to contact Dr. Betty Griffin, Beginning Teacher Internship Program, 18th Floor, Capital Plaza Tower, Frankfort, Kentucky 40601. Please review carefully the Appendices to the Handbook, which include relevant legislation and regulations of the program.

The Department of Education consultants can also provide you with resources and technical assistance relevant to your teaching assignment. Contact your local supervisor, who may offer you department publications or refer you to an appropriate contact person at the state level.

Administrators and supervisors in your district are interested in your completing a successful internship. Early in your first year, find out from your resource teacher what types of assistance are available in your district. Content specialists or supervisors, who are only a phone call away, can provide expertise, equipment, and texts to assist you. Supervisors are also valuable resources in individualizing your instructional program to meet the varying abilities of your students. Subject or grade level supervisors frequently maintain professional libraries or resource files from which

they distribute copies of materials upon request. By beginning your planning well in advance of teaching any unit, you might take advantage of resources they can provide. Supervisors may also be able to link you with former interns in other buildings who can advise you. Observations and feedback on your teaching may be another type of assistance your supervisor can provide. With this individual, as with other busy professionals, you must take the initiative and ask questions if you need assistance.

College/University Personnel

As an ever-increasing percentage of Kentucky teacher educators are becoming trained in the FPMS, it is possible to call on your former college instructors for advice and assistance. Since they are no longer evaluating you but may have observed your teaching in the past, they are in a position to provide suggestions practical to your setting and relevant to FPMS indicators. Consider inviting a former instructor to observe your class, use the FPMS instrument to code your behaviors, and discuss your strengths and weaknesses. While this process cannot subsitute for nor influence official observations, committee meetings, or committee recommendations, it can provide you with new insights and careful suggestions to practice prior to your next observation and can help lower your anxiety.

Your former instructors may also offer recommendations on resources to improve your teaching or suggest teachers you might observe who are especially skilled in various aspects of teaching. Remember that since the FPMS indicators are teaching behaviors common to all grades and subjects, teacher educators and teachers in fields other than your own assignment may be good models.

Other Teachers

Interns and experienced teachers continually cite other teachers as among the most important sources of practical and relevant assistance.

Occasionally a resource teacher is assigned who is not in the intern's building or district or does not teach in the same field or level. Sometimes a personality conflict develops between the resource teacher and the intern. In these cases, as an intern, you may need additional sources of assistance; two obvious choices emerge.

Other teachers of your grade/level within your building can offer aid by providing activity suggestions or advice on dealing with behavior problems, observing your teaching and providing feedback, or allowing you to observe their teaching. Remember to continually analyze your own teaching so that you can identify your strengths and weaknesses, understand the comments of your committee members, and focus your questions for and observations of other teachers to yield greatest benefits. Remember, also, that what is effective for one teacher may be difficult to replicate and not necessarily effective in your own teaching. Don't despair--your teaching expertise evolves over time, and benefits from considering your own experience and that of others.

Finally, one of the most valuable sources of assistance and commiseration can be former interns. As with other teachers, however, the former interns are busy professionals with no responsibility for assistance to you. Establishing a give-and-take relationship early in your first year can be an important professional asset to both of you throughout your careers, as long as one partner does not become overly dependent on the other.

GENERAL TIPS

The resource teachers and interns, study group developers of this guide, believe that the survey questions and intern responses did not capture all the suggestions they might wish to give you. The General Tips section of the guide was designed to include recommendations from the group members and other resource teachers and interns whose opinions they reflect.

We hope you will find the guide comprehensive with the addition of General Tips. Please complete the Evaluation/Additions form (Appendix B), adding any advice you would like to contribute to future editions.

1. Be positive about the internship program.

2. Be sure you know exactly what each person on the committee expects of you in every area. Establish working relationships with all members.

3. Review the FPMS indicators often. They are a guide to effective teaching.

4. Don't worry. Do your best.

5. Be confident and assertive.

6. Ask questions. No question is "dumb"!

7. Smile and maintain your sense of humor.

8. Become involved in extracurricular school activities (e.g., sponsoring a club or coaching a sport), but be careful not to overcommit yourself the first year.

9. Try to leave your problems at school. If you take them all home, you may go crazy!

10. Take all criticism as constructive.

11. Keep your ears open, remain confident, and work as hard as you can.

12. Hope for it all to pass quickly!

The authors of "Keys to an Effective Internship" agree with the first 11 of the above comments and hope that the advice contained herein will assist you in growing professionally during your first year of teaching.

KENTUCKY INTERNSHIP SURVEY

Below are several questions about your internship experiences. Please take the time necessary to share your thoughts and feelings about the program for the benefit of future beginning teachers.

1. Were you familiar with the components of the Internship Program prior to your first observation?_____ If not, please explain those areas in which you needed further information.

2. What did you expect from your first internship meeting? Did the meeting meet your expectations?_____ If not, why?

3. Were you anxious about your first meeting?_____ What knowledge or assistance could have made you more comfortable?

4 her times during your internship when you were uneasy. edge or assistance may have made these times less

e note below any assistance future interns may benefit from the following Program components.

ok contents _____

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Observations _____

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Committee meetings _____

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Portfolio development _____

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Lesson planning _____

_____

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Resource teacher assistance _____

_____

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6. What additional suggestions to improve the process for interns would you give?

Thank you for your assistance. Watch for the KEA-AEL aid to interns publication.

Keys to an Effective Internship

EVALUATION/ADDITIONS

KEA and AEL appreciate your use of "Keys to an Effective Internship." We hope that you will assist us in improving this guide for future interns by completing the following questions:

1. Which sections of the guide have you found helpful? Please explain briefly how these sections helped you.

2. What changes would you suggest making in future editions of a guide for interns?

3. How did you receive your copy of "Keys to an Effective Internship"? How many other interns are you aware of who received a copy?

4. Have you shared your "Keys" copy with other teachers? If so, how many?

5. Do you have suggestions regarding the internship that could benefit future interns? Your contribution will be included in any revised editions of "Keys to an Effective Internship." You can receive a copy by providing your address below.

Name: _____

School/District: _____

Address: _____

_____

Thank you for completing this evaluation/contribution form. Please mail it to AEL, P. O. Box 1348, Charleston, WV 25325.

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